

Introduction to the North Carolina Zoo's Field Conservation Program

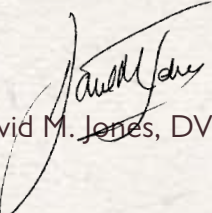
Year after year the natural world is coming under ever-greater pressure from the activities of a growing human population. Particularly in developing countries, human populations are growing at alarming rates. However, the ecological footprint is as much as 30 times per individual greater in wealthier countries than it is in developing economies. Already, demands from both the developing and wealthier countries have passed the point where the Earth's natural resources can be fully replenished. If we continue on our present pathway, by 2050 humankind will need two Earths to provide the required natural resources.

The rapid consumption of natural resources threatens the survival of many of the species with whom we share our planet. Unsustainable use of natural products like timber, along with environmental pollution and the conversion of natural areas for agriculture, are just a few of the ways in which we are negatively affecting the environment. If we do not change how we interact with the natural world in significant ways, we will soon run out of resources, disrupt the ecosystems in which we live, and push hundreds, if not thousands, of species into extinction. It is therefore imperative that every major biological institution around the world plays a significant role in the maintenance of biodiversity, and in so doing help to ensure the maintenance of healthy ecosystems. No single institution can

do this alone; it is only through institutions such as ours making a significant contribution as part of that wider biological and conservation community that we can hope to stabilize the situation for our children and grandchildren.

The field conservation program of the North Carolina Zoo has been growing steadily for the last ten years, but we are currently planning to take a significant leap forward in the range of programs that we run, both regionally and around the world. At present the Zoo and Zoo Society spend approximately 2% of our budgets on conservation of animals and plants in the wild. However, we plan to extend that commitment to at least 5% of our overall budget within the next five years and up to 10% of our total budget within a decade. Apart from some salary costs, virtually all that funding will have to come from private sources, including individuals, foundations, government grants and through partnerships with like-minded organizations.

I hope that, in reading this report and recognizing the steady expansion that we are undertaking with our field conservation program, that you will join us in supporting our efforts for the long-term future.



David M. Jones, DVM



David Jones has been Director of the North Carolina Zoo since 1994. He previously worked for the Zoological Society of London for 25 years, ending up as its CEO. David is a veterinarian and zoologist by training and has served on the boards of numerous international and local conservation organizations. He has consulted on conservation and wildlife matters in over 50 countries and has written over 100 scientific papers. David believes very strongly that stewardship of our natural resources will only succeed if people come to understand the links between their well-being, the economy and the environment.